

DOINGWHATWORKS



Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Connecting Academic Content to Careers

Western Hills University High School, Ohio • February 2009

Topic: Dropout Prevention

Practice: Rigorous/Relevant Instruction

Highlights

- Western Hills University High School holds college fairs, college tours, and college awareness days to keep students informed of post-secondary academic options.
- Students from the University of Cincinnati mentor eleventh-grade students in the Financial Management class.
- Eighth graders can transition into high school smoothly through the Summer Bridge program at Western Hills.
- Career and technical education is implemented to allow all students multiple pathways toward careers.

About the Site

Western Hills University High School

Cincinnati, OH

Demographics

72% Black

22% White

3% Other

2% Hispanic

56% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

3% English Language Learners

25% Special Education

Western Hills University High School focuses on preparing students for graduation through a rigorous and relevant academic curriculum and through programs that help students understand and prepare for postsecondary options.

The school implements programs that:

- Offer classes and opportunities for students to develop stronger social and emotional skills
- Organize students into teams with teachers who provide extensive academic support to ensure students are adequately prepared to be successful on the Ohio Graduation Tests
- Provide students a disciplined and personalized learning environment
- Expose students to postsecondary options that include college, the workforce, and other training programs

Full Transcript

Presentation Title: Connecting Academic Content to Careers

Western Hills University High School, Cincinnati, OH

Title slide: Angela Harris is the Campus Family Support Manager at Western Hills University High School in Cincinnati, OH. She helps to facilitate the college and career programs at the school.

Slide 1: Career Focus

Text: Career and technical education is implemented at Western Hills University High School to allow all students multiple pathways toward careers.

Audio: The career focus that we do here is more aligned with access to college and a student's ability to pursue their dreams in whatever career they would choose. So, what we try to do is we try to develop mentors and adults who will come in and work with our students around business, nursing, engineering, things like that. In addition to that, we have students who have interest, for instance, in theatre and

becoming evangelists, so we started a choir, and we support them in their efforts to pursue their dreams in that way.

Slide 2: Key Club

Text: Western Hills University High School's Key Club engages students by providing them with the opportunity to become involved in the community. The students have participated in many community service activities, including donating books and raising money for victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Audio: The people who run the Key Club, the youngsters who run that, have a passion for helping others. They've done all kinds of wonderful things in the community. They've made hats, gloves, and scarves for little children that live in the Bethany House. They raised money for New Orleans.

Slide 3: College Fairs

Text: Every September, approximately 50 colleges are represented at Western Hills' Parent Night and Open House. Representatives from local trade schools are also in attendance. Students are exposed to a variety of postsecondary academic options.

Audio: Every September, we invite about 50 or so local community colleges, within a 100-mile radius or so, to join us on our first Parent Night and our first Open House, and we combine all of those together so that we can expose our students to all of the possibilities. In addition to colleges, we also have trades come and talk about the different trades as well, so that though we are university school and we want children to go to college, the reality is that everyone is not going to college. So we can help those other students find their way in their careers and their areas of interest. We support them in that as well.

Slide 4: College Tours

Text: Students at Western Hills participate in college tours and open houses. These visits, when combined with financial aid application assistance, demonstrate positive effects on students completing school and staying in school.

Audio: We take students on college tours. We go to many college open houses. My coworker took them to the University of Cincinnati on Monday, which was a holiday, so that the students could be exposed to the University of Cincinnati. So, it doesn't really matter if it's a holiday, a Saturday, or a Sunday; we do what we can to support our kids.

Slide 5: Financial Management and Mentoring

Text: Eight students from the University of Cincinnati mentor eleventh-graders in the Financial Management class at Western Hills. The students share about their college experiences and encourage the high school students to enter the field of engineering.

Audio: In our financial management class, we have our double ace juniors, and that's a first bell. In addition to their focus on financial management, there is a project where we partner with the University of Cincinnati and the Department of Computer Engineering, and they come over and do nanotechnology in an effort to encourage students to go into engineering and computer engineering in particular. And they teach them all kinds of amazing things. And they bring about eight college students who then mentor that classroom. And so, that relationship is maintained throughout the school year. It's a very exciting program.

Slide 6: College Awareness Days

Text: College awareness days are held to involve students in obtaining specific information about local colleges. Students are divided into teams to create a five-minute presentation that highlights the important things to know about a particular college or university.

Audio: In the spring, we will have our college awareness days, and we'll do a big contest between teams. And each grade level and each team will put on a five-minute presentation around college. And we have one team called The Musketeers, and they will have three musketeers, and they will have swords, and they will tell you all about that particular school, the cost, the professors. They do tons of research so that they can win the contest. And it's throughout the school. Everything is focused on college.

Slide 7: Summer Bridge Program

Text: The Summer Bridge Program at Western Hills is used to help eighth graders transition into ninth grade smoothly. The program lasts for three weeks, and students earn a partial credit and a small stipend for attending.

Audio: They have three-week program with math, English, Spanish, and PE, and they earn a partial credit. We give them light breakfast and provide transportation. And basically, it's fun for them. They get to know the school, the principal, the staff, their way around this building, and it eases their transition into the ninth grade.

Slide 8: Summer Institute

Text: The Summer Institute at Western Hills is an eight-week academic program held on a local college campus and taught by college professors. It provides students with the opportunity to consider career and postsecondary options early.

Audio: Summer Institute operates in a very similar fashion, except that it is on a college campus and it usually has a focus. It could be to train them. It could be ACT and SAT preparation. It could just be of a variety of things. Last year, our summer institute ran for eight weeks, and we were able to partner with another community agency and pay our students for participating as though it was a summer job, except that it was academic.

Slide 9: College Center

Text: In Western Hills' college center, knowledgeable and supportive advisors assist students in navigating the college application process. Students can access college information throughout the day and into the evening.

Audio: The college center is a place where we work out of. Our focus, though it's actually eighth grade through college, we tend to see the eleventh and twelfth graders in the college center. They use it for everything. We use it for our meetings. We use it for college focus, of course. There are computers there that have been donated by the Gates Foundation so that each student can access college information. We basically don't have any specific hours. We are there for our kids. If it takes them 'til five or six, we stay 'til five or six. We do what it takes to get them to college. And it's just kind of a house for everybody. And at lunch time, the college center is packed. You can hardly hear yourself talk, and that's wonderful.